

CHUN HYANG SONG

(춘향가)

A Musical in Two Acts

by William Cleary

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INTERMISSION	
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Scene Six:	The Governor’s Palace “No Finer Ruler,” reprise “Poor Men” “Finale”

Cast

The main characters (in order of appearance):

Bang Ja:	Mong Yong's witty servant boy
Mong Yong:	an arrogant young nobleman
Byon Satdo:	a provincial magistrate, a fierce tyrant
Wolmae:	Chun Hyang's petulant, talkative mother
Hyang Dan	Chun Hyang's sweet, gentle servant girl
Chun Hyang	a strong, heroically loyal young woman

Pronunciation

Namwon, Byon, Wolmae, Sobangnim: the o is unrounded and pronounced like the o in won.

Doryong, Doryonnim: the r is flapped; the second o is unrounded (as in won); in all Korean words, when a y comes after a consonant and precedes a vowel, it is not pronounced as a separate syllable. In Doryong, then, the ryong is one syllable.

“Notes by the Play’s Author” appear at the end of the play. Please refer to these notes for production and performance directions.

Chun Hyang Song

Overture Scene

The theatre darkens. Behind the curtain the Chorus is humming the song “Nae Sarang,” which is now a tradition in Korea. As the curtain opens, the company begins to sing the Korean lyrics of the song. All are sitting in Korean fashion, the women in a line halfway upstage, the men at the back-line, the platforms setting the performers at different heights without destroying the formality of the scene. MUSIC: a familiar Korean operatic aria by Hyun Jae-Myong

CHORUS: (*Sings*)

Han beon-eul bo-a-do nae sa-rang,
Yeol beon-eul bo-a-do nae sa-rang,
A-mo-ri bo-a-do sa-rang eo-yeo-bbeun
Chun Hyang na-e sa-rang.

I-reo-kae bo-a-do nae sa-rang,
Jeo-reo-kae bo-a-do ne sa-rang,
A-mo-ri bo-a-do sa-rang eo-yeo-bbeun
Chun Hyang na-e sa-rang.

(Then suddenly standing, they sing the song in English.)

If I look once, I see my love,
If I look ten times, I see my love,
A thousand times that I see my love,
She will always be my love.

If I look this way, I see my love,
If I look that way, I see my love,
A thousand ways that I see my love,
She will always be my love.

BANG JA (*He has rushed out and directed the closing bars of the song, and has motioned the company first to bow, then to sit down. He then greets the audience.*)

Good evening! We welcome all of you to “Chun Hyang Song,” an English version of one of Korea’s most ancient musical treasures. The story dates back hundreds of years and is well known by every Korean. Chun Hyang has become in fact a part of Korea itself. And so now we will take you back to the days when Seoul was still called Hanyang, and down to Korea’s beautiful southland, to the city of Namwon, the land of Chun Hyang Song. All right, who will help me tell the story? (*Six people from the cast rise and step forward.*) Fine. You will please be Chun Hyang, and you Hyang Dan, and you Wolmae, and you, Byon Satdo, and you Yi Mong Yong, and, if you don’t mind, I will be Bang Ja. All the rest of you have to help us from time to time. We need gisaengs, farmers, a blind man, and so on. But mostly give us music. Come, let us all introduce ourselves to the audience. Chorus, sing some background music for these introductions. Naturally, since I am Bang Ja, I will be first. Music, please.

MUSIC: “Nongbu-ga” by Chorus

BANG JA: Please clap your hands. Thank you. Thank you. I am Bang Ja. Please try to remember that name: Bang Ja. I am the most important actor.

MONG YONG: Now, wait a minute!

BANG JA: All right, I am not the most important. I meant to say, Bang Ja is someone important. I am the servant — I mean, the assistant of the hero. Although I cannot read or write, I can do many useful things. I help the hero — Yi Mong Yong — to find Chun Hyang and marry her. And then I help to cheer up the little maid-

servant of Chun Hyang. Her name is Hyang Dan. (*He sighs loudly.*) And I help to save Chun Hyang from death. Now, clap again, please. Thank you.

MUSIC: "She's Everywhere"

MONG YONG: How do you do. I am Yi Mong Yong, also called Yi Doryong or Doryonnim. As it happens, my father is the magistrate, or the governor, of Namwon. Perhaps you have seen Namwon on the map, or you may even have visited it. Namwon is a lovely town in Cheolla-Bukdo, west of the Chiri Mountains and east of the Red City River. I am the son of a noble, a yangban — and that is very important in this play. Furthermore, I am a student of the Chinese Classics, and in the play I pass the famous government examination. By means of these examinations, China — and Korea — were governed for centuries by their most talented people (*indicating himself*). Thank you.

MUSIC: "No Finer Ruler"

BYON SATDO: I am Byon Satdo, described in different places in the play as a "tiger," a "beast," a "criminal," and a number of other exaggerations. It is true that I am not an easy ruler. Which of you would be an easy ruler? It is also true that I have a sense of beauty, the "esthetic," shall we say, where women are concerned. That is hardly abnormal in a man. I come to Namwon and the first act of the people is one of disobedience. Naturally, I am severe — as you will see. But I am within my rights. Thank you.

MUSIC: "Wolmae's Song"

WOLMAE Let me speak first for the women. How do you do. I am Wolmae, the mother of Chun Hyang. Although I myself was nothing — am nothing in the play — my daughter, my great and noble daughter, my Chun Hyang, becomes the greatest heroine of Korea. And she does it, you will see, without — without — the help of men. I am older now, and once was a gisaeng, a dancing-girl, obliged to

serve and entertain government officials. But I married a noble — that dog — and so, rightly, my daughter is not a gisaeng. She is not. Thank you; I'll see you later and explain more about it.

MUSIC: "Stars In Your Eyes."

HYANG DAN: (*She bows to the ground.*) How do you do. I am the maid-servant, Hyang Dan. In this play, I am a little like Bang Ja — only, of course (*very embarrassed*) — Bang Ja is a boy and — I am a — girl. (*She steals a look at Bang Ja.*) My work is to serve Chun Hyang and stay with her — to protect her from people like him (*pointing to Mong Yong*) and him (*Byon*). But unfortunately I do a poor job. And he (*Mong Yong*) falls in love with her (*Chun Hyang*), and he (*Bang Ja*) falls in love — (*utterly embarrassed*) — with — me. Thank you.

MUSIC: "Sobangnim"

CHUN HYANG: And my privilege will be to take the lines of Chun Hyang, Korea's greatest heroine, and the model of all faithful wives. The sources of this ancient Korean story say that Chun Hyang is well-educated — so I will try to speak in an educated way. Chun Hyang is a story of — let us say, of rebellion. I rebel against Byon Satdo, and against social customs, of course — but that is not why I become famous. I become famous for my love, for my faithfulness to my husband unto death. And there is rebellion in every such virtue. But perhaps you already understand. Thank you.

MUSIC: Ad lib, piano flourish, and the stage action continues.

ACT I

Scene 1: The Pavilion at Namwon

BANG JA: Now, let's begin. The first scene takes place in a kind of park, the pavilion at Namwon. You can still visit this pavilion today, by the way. This will be the pavilion, that is the park, and way over there is the swing, the swing where women enjoy themselves especially on Dan-o, the fifth day of the fifth month. This play begins on Dan-o. The chorus will now become part of the scenery. (The Chorus hums as it moves to its place and puts on masks. Several of the Chorus men transform the high platform into a pavilion at far left.) Now, chorus, sing something that sounds like springtime, a time for swinging and singing and falling in love. Actors and actresses, prepare for the scene. It's spring!

The leading characters exit left and right, the stage takes on the color and atmosphere of spring.

The Chorus, who have seated themselves, Korean style, along two tiers at the back of the stage, break into the song. There is a brief light-hearted dance. Soon after, Chun Hyang, dressed in red and yellow, hurries onto the stage, looks all around for a hiding place, and finally steps out of sight behind the pavilion. Hyang Dan, with a large basket of greens on her head, comes in next, anxiously looking for Chun Hyang. She hurries out right. MUSIC: "Spring Song"

CHORUS: (*Sings*)

Spring — the time when my heart is swinging,

Spring — that flings my heart in the air,

Birds and mountains sing to me, and bring to me

New songs from everywhere.

Spring — when skies are blue and inviting,

Spring — I fly with nothing to fear,

How could I refuse to sing the news that Spring is here?

CHUN HYANG: (*Sings*)

Why do spirits of rivers and hills

So possess me today?

Why only once, only once in the year,

Do I find myself feeling this way?

(*And she repeats the whole song, helped by the Chorus.*)

HYANG DAN: (*entering, a bit upset*) Chun Hyang, my Lady! (*She takes the basket down and bows.*) Why did you run away? I was so worried.

CHUN HYANG: Oh, I don't know. Why is it spring?

HYANG DAN: And, my lady, I don't think we should have come here, to the pavilion.

Not in daylight, my lady. Your mother would not like it. And I don't like it either.

I'm worried.

CHUN HYANG: Oh, don't be worried. It's spring!

HYANG DAN: Yes, my lady, but what if — what if — (*She whispers in her ear. Chun Hyang laughs and covers her face with her fan.*) Please don't laugh, my lady. Spring is the best time — I mean, the worst time of the year for falling in love. You must be careful. When the flowers bloom, the butterflies come, flip, flip, flip! You remember the song we learned as children? (*MUSIC: "Butterflies"*)

(*Sings*)

Butterflies go flip! flip! flip!

Catching flowers every trip.

Flowers wait and hum! hum! hum!

Hoping butterflies will come.

(The song is a round and Chun Hyang and the Chorus join, the two girls dancing.)

CHUN HYANG: *(after the song)* Oh, I suppose you are right, Hyang Dan. We have to be extremely careful. Come, let's go over to the big swing. I feel like flying!

HYANG DAN: Please stop feeling that way, my lady. We can swing awhile, but we have to go home soon. Your mother will be worried.

Hyang Dan puts the basket back on her head, and they exit upstage right as the Chorus resumes, humming. MUSIC: "Butterfly Song"

Immediately, downstage right, Yi Mong Yong enters in the blue robes of a young noble, looking all about him curiously. Bang Ja follows him humbly, miming that he carries a low wine table with a bottle and glasses on it. Mong Yong mounts the pavilion platform, leaving his shoes on the step in Korean fashion. Bang Ja does the same and begins immediately to pour the wine for his master. Mong Yong has just tasted his drink when suddenly he points toward the swing.

MONG YONG: Bang Ja!

BANG JA: Yes, master.

MONG YONG: Look there.

BANG JA: *(without looking, so concerned is he with the wine)* Yes, it's beautiful, our city of Namwon. You have been here only two days, but you will come to like it, master. More wine?

MONG YONG: Look, look there, where my fan is pointing.

BANG JA: *(straining his eyes)* Oh! That's the famous Ojakgyo, the Magpie Bridge. Lovely.

MONG YONG: Hair like an orchid, skin white as silvery clouds, eyebrows like the crescent moon. What a golden vision!

BANG JA: Golden! Let me explain about gold. Ahem. (*reciting*) Here in Namwon in the days of the ancient Han of China, one great lord gave away, scattered, forty thousand gold pieces among the soldiers of Cho. It was a plot. But, wham! (*dramatizing decapitation*) You're not listening, master.

MONG YONG: Who can she be?

BANG JA: She? (*looking*) Ah, ha. There on the swing? Oh, look away, master. (*covering line of sight*) Look away. You are a student, master. No girls for you.

MONG YONG: Idiot! (*He knocks Bang Ja's hand down.*) Who is she? Call her here.

BANG JA: (*squinting*) Oh, Master, that is Chun Hyang. Chun Hyang, the Fragrance of Spring! The most beautiful girl in Namwon.

MONG YONG: She must be a gisaeng because she is here in daylight. Call her here. Get going, Bang Ja.

BANG JA: (*crouching before Mong Yong*) Excuse me, master. Chun Hyang is a gisaeng's daughter, but her father was yangban, a noble. So she is not a gisaeng. We cannot call her. She is a woman of good family.

MONG YONG: What is her family name?

BANG JA: Song.

MONG YONG: From all my study of genealogy, I can't remember any such family in Namwon. Besides, the daughter of a gisaeng is a gisaeng. Call her. Call her!

Bang Ja tries several times to speak again or to turn back, but Mong Yong won't listen. MUSIC: "Spring Song" begins immediately in the chorus, Mong Yong joining in. Bang Ja hurriedly leaves the pavilion and starts to go, but with obvious reluctance. Whenever he turns back, Mong Yong points again with his fan. Bang Ja leaves and the song continues. In the middle of the song, Bang Ja comes running back and goes to Mong Yong, but is sent out again. As the song ends, Bang Ja appears

right, being driven by Hyang Dan, who has a stick in her hand. Mong Yong is preoccupied with his wine and the scenery.

HYANG DAN: Go away, and don't come back!

BANG JA: *(He looks around, she threatens him with the stick. When he is a safe distance, he speaks)* Hyang Dan. Listen, please. I promise I will never go near you and Chun Hyang again.

HYANG DAN: Do you really promise?

BANG JA: Ah, Hyang Dan, how strong and fearless you are!

HYANG DAN: *(blushing, looking down)* Oh, do you think so — *(Bang Ja starts toward her, she sees him and threatens.)* Hye!

BANG JA: Hyang Dan, my master insists. He is a yangban, the new Magistrate's son. He wants Chun Hyang to come.

HYANG DAN: She is no gisaeng. She is yangban.

BANG JA: She is only half yangban. She is a lame yangban. *(He does a little stiffman dance.)* Oh, sweet girl *(Hyang Dan turning away embarrassed, Bang Ja approaching slowly)*, fearless girl, lovely girl, charming —

HYANG DAN: *(Finally seeing him coming, she turns threateningly)* Hye!

MONG YONG: *(calling from platform)* Bang Ja!

BANG JA: Here, master! *(He runs to Mong Yong, Hyang Dan runs out.)*

MONG YONG: Why were you so long? Where is Chun Hyang?

BANG JA: *(standing near the pavilion, bowing often)* I'm sorry, master. Chun Hyang says she will not come. She says that she is not a gisaeng.

MONG YONG: So, she will not come! Ah! I feel like Emperor Soon in the willow grove.

BANG JA: I'm sorry, master.

MONG YONG: I could weep tears of blood.

BANG JA: That's too bad, master.

MONG YONG: Ah, Chun Hyang is a princess at heart.

BANG JA: (*formally*) Well, I have a message from the princess.

MONG YONG: What?

BANG JA: A message, master.

MONG YONG: You idiot, why didn't you tell me? What message?

BANG JA: I don't understand it. She said, "A flower does not chase a butterfly; a butterfly must come to the flower."

MONG YONG: A butterfly must come to the flower — What does she mean?

BANG JA: S-h-h-h! Listen. (*MUSIC: Offstage, we hear Chun Hyang and Hyang Dan singing "Butterflies." The Chorus helps. Bang Ja sings and dramatizes "Flower-Catching" in a silly little dance. Mong Yong watches him disapprovingly.*)

MONG YONG: (*after song, pointing*) Look, they are gone.

BANG JA: What?

MONG YONG: Vanished.

BANG JA: Escaped! (*Mong Yong looks threateningly.*) Er — vanished.

MONG YONG: We must go to Chun Hyang's tonight. We will fly like butterflies. (He catches himself.) Ahem.

BANG JA: But your studies! You are a student!

MONG YONG: Oh, what should I do? Well, I'll take a chance this one time and not study.

BANG JA: Ah, as Confucius said, "Never let your studies interfere with your education." (*He smothers a laugh.*) But how about your honorable father? Your father will be furious if he finds out, master. Your father —

Mong Yong begins to sing a snatch of "Spring Song" and starts out.

Bang Ja follows, protesting. Mong Yong exits, the stage dims out, and

Bang Ja goes into a spotlight at far left. He takes up an over-size script of the play which he uses throughout in his office of “Director.” MUSIC: On stage, the chorus is humming “Spring Song” and beginning to set the stage for the next scene.

CURTAIN

Notes by the Play’s Author

Every Korean knows and loves the story of the maiden Chun Hyang. Every school-boy can tell you of the villainous Byo’n Satdo, every actress’ dream is someday to play — or sing or dance — the part of faithful Chun Hyang. Every year, in spring, two or three or more companies perform the classic, in some form or other, in Korea’s capital city.

Scholars have found more than seventy different versions of the story, the most authentic dating back almost 300 years. In the twenty most ancient manuscripts, Professor Kim Dong-uk finds 88 distinct episodes. A desire to share these riches with non-Korean audiences brought Chun Hyang Song into existence. (Chun Hyang, in English, means “Fragrance of Spring,” and “Song” is the heroine’s family name, which provides us, of course, with a convenient pun in the title.)

In Chun Hyang Song we have chosen to use those episodes most popularly known in Korea today, a choice originally made by Yi Hae-jo in his 1912 novel, which was given an excellent, literal translation by missionary James Scarth Gale in 1918. Our other major source has been a short story of Chun Hyang, translated and published by an American diplomat, H.N. Allen. Quite a few lines in this adaptation are taken directly by tradition. From the pansori or folk opera versions of the story we have taken the farmer’s song, “Nongbu-ga,” as well as the general spirit of our play, which is a blend of farce and melodrama. The lyrics for the blind man’s song, “I Remember Well,” are put together from Richard Rutt’s famous translations of Korean Sijo Poetry,¹ some of the verses dating back as far as the 14th century. The opening song, “When I Look Once,” is from the late Hyun Jae-myo’ng’s Grand Opera of Chun Hyang, the words newly translated. We have inevitably given the story a twist of our own — which always happens in folk drama — but we have the advice and counsel of a number of scholars and artists to be thankful for, particularly for the help of Harvard University.

The People in the Play

Chun Hyang Song is a play written primarily for non-Korean audiences since it is written in a language foreign to Korea. Still, a large number of Koreans can understand it since English is studied by all Korean students beginning in the first year of

Middle School. For Koreans, any description of the people in the play is superfluous. The six main characters are established by tradition and cannot be changed. But for the benefit of non-Koreans, there is a special “Overture Scene” within the play itself in which the main characters are given a chance to explain themselves to those who are not familiar with the story. Once these explanations are over, the play proceeds in the spirit of its Korean sources, without very much explanation of why the people in the play behave the way they do.

The form of the play, musical comedy, is decidedly Western. But the people in the play are Korean, the plot is Korean, the values in the play are Korean, and the truth and beauty in the story are Korean — and this is what makes it an apt subject for translation and for re-expression in new forms and new languages. The Chun Hyang story is, in fact, a little epiphany of the Korean heart, and even the crudest attempt at re-creating that epiphany is worth trying.

Performance Notes

Our production method approximates that of the *Commedia dell’Arte*, an entertainment style of the Italian Renaissance. The singing chorus remains on stage throughout the play, sometimes taking part in the scene, sometimes playing the role of scenery. While all the music has the flavor of the West, there are, in all, four attempts made to introduce something like the rhythm and mode of Korean music.

The Set

The set is formal, and its main components remain the same throughout. Variations of lighting occasionally divide the stage into separate acting areas. Dominating the stage are three over-size masks hanging on a dark back-drop, with the hero’s mask in the center, the heroine’s mask at left, the villain’s at right: a visual presentation of the conflict. There is a permanent platform two feet wide and two feet high all along the right half of the back-line, and a small square platform of the same height at right. These platforms are used flexibly by the chorus as they take different positions, sitting or standing, in different scenes. Because of the Korean custom of sitting on the floor, a third platform is necessary — actually a kind of stage upon the stage — of table height and about eight feet square, which is moved about in different scenes. It is equipped with several sets of changeable walls, these walls being fan-shaped and brightly colored, with a large Chinese character in the center to indicate that the platform is now a room, now a pavilion, now a jail cell and so on. The play requires very little other furniture and very few hand props since, in keeping with the stylization, almost every action requiring props is pantomimed. The small amount of scene changing is done by the company itself during each after-scene blackout. The Master of the Comedy — who casts the play at the start, directs the scene changing, and fills in the narration between scenes — also plays the part of Bang Ja in the play, and has a high platform all his own to the left of the main stage.

The Costumes

The costumes for the Chorus, and for the leading characters before the “casting” is done, are also stylized, though traditionally Korean in design. The women wear the full-length *chima-chogeri* in various non-bright color combinations, and the men wear white jackets and white baggy pants and leggings which suggest Korean farmers from days of old. After the casting, the leading characters leave the stage and put on the brightly colored costumes traditionally called for by their roles. The chorus

members have half-face masks (brown for the boys, white for the girls) hanging around their necks, which they wear when they are on stage but not involved in the scene being played.

Other Styles of Performance

When the stage is ample — as it was for the 1988 Olympics production or the downtown Seoul version that preceded it — many more choices of style may be made. The half-face masks become less necessary, and the costumes of singing chorus or dancing chorus may be more varied, with choruses changing costume for different roles instead of posing as an acting company in the *Commedia dell'arte* style. It is probably valuable to keep intact the “Overture Scene,” where melodies are identified with certain characters, because that is all brought back in the finale. It will also give non-Korean viewers a chance to catch up with the Koreans in the audience, who begin with total familiarity with the play.

William Cleary

Afterword

This pansori was probably the most popular of all the pansori, and even the Confucian yangban aristocracy enjoyed it. The yangban should not even have known about it, since pansori was fashioned and performed mostly by society's lowest class, and it was considered beneath the attention of a Confucian literati.² In fact, it was even performed in the royal court. There are two possible reasons that Confucians appreciated the story, and they both derive from the five principles governing human relations that Confucius established. One principle was the proper relationship between husband and wife, which extends to all men and women: Woman is subject to man. Chun Hyang adhered to this principle admirably. Her refusal to obey Byon Satdo's order to make herself available to him was, on the surface, an act of insubordination to a man; she did this, though, in order to honor a previous and more noble commitment to another man, her husband.

Still, it's difficult to imagine how a straightlaced Confucian could tolerate a story that condoned the idea of a yangban (Mong Yong) consorting with the daughter of a gisaeng, a member of society's lowest class. The gisaeng served a double purpose, to entertain men (a good gisaeng was highly talented in the arts that Confucian gentlemen appreciated) and to satisfy their appetite for female company. A yangban-gisaeng relationship that reflected the gisaeng's dual function was considered proper; if any hint of romantic love appeared, however, the relationship would be considered improper. Since this happened in our story — and worse: they married — we are back to the question of why Confucians appreciated this story.

The answer to this question may lie in another of the five principles, the one that defined the proper relationship between subject and ruler (in Korea, the ruler being any yangban). Of course, the subject is supposed to be loyal and obedient to the ruler. But there is another side to this principle: the superior also has an obligation to care for the inferior. Byon Satdo violated this principle, and any good Confucian yangban would condemn him for this. In our story, justice was served. So it is possible that the story's victory of the two principles — a woman's obligation to her

man, and an aristocrat's obligation to his inferiors — permitted the Confucian class to overlook the scandalous violation of decorum committed by Mong Yong.

In case the story's support of two important Confucian principles wasn't enough to gain a yangban's approval, other versions of the story might have clinched it. In some versions Mong Yong never returned, and Chun Hyang died in misery. This would allow the upright Confucian to say, "There you go — serves them right."

The pansori story of Chun Hyang has more versions than any other pansori story, and it will be informative to take a close look at a couple of them. One legend, passed down to us from the reign of King Sukjong (r. 1661 – 1720), tells us that, after Mong Yong and Chun Hyang began their amorous relationship and Mong Yong left for the higher civil service exam in Seoul, Mong Yong's father was dismissed from his position as magistrate in Namwon. This ruined the family, and Mong Yong didn't return to Namwon. Chunhyang didn't know the real reason that Mong Yong wasn't returning, and she died of grief. After she died, the region was hit by one disaster after another, causing widespread suffering and death. After a lot of discussion it was finally decided that all of this adversity was being brought on them by Chun Hyang's grieving spirit, so they had a shaman perform a rite to placate her spirit. During this rite Chun Hyang's story was recited, hoping that it would have a cathartic effect on Chun Hyang's spirit. It worked. After the rite, normality returned. To be safe, though, the inhabitants of Namwon and then other nearby areas performed this rite every year. Kwangdae heard the story told at the rite, thought it had lots of potential, and developed a pansori performance from it. (Some go so far as to say that this was the beginning of pansori.)³

Professor Sul Sung Gyung of Yonsei University thinks that basic elements in all versions of the legend — the main characters and a poem which is consistent from version to version — were recorded in the seventeenth century memoirs of Cho Gyeong-nam, the tutor of the model for Mong Yong. Sul says that the name of Cho's student was actually Seong I-seong, and his father was the highly respected magistrate of Namwon. Cho did not tell us about the relationship between Seong and any gisaeng, but did say that Seong lived in Namwon for four years, left Namwon at 16 when his father was transferred, and then passed his licentiate for higher civil service in Seoul. He returned once to Namwon years later on his tour as a secret inspector for the royal court, and asked specifically for a certain older gisaeng, and they talked "late into the night." Sul says that Cho made no mention of their adolescent amorous relationship because it could only have hurt the young man's reputation. Intriguing supporting evidence for Sul's theory is a poem recorded in Cho Gyeong-nam's memoirs as having been written by a visiting Chinese dignitary who was disgusted with the corruption and venality that he saw among the yangban on a visit to Namwon. This is the same poem that the secret inspector in the pansori story and our play composed at the lavish party thrown for fellow yangban by Byon Satdo, who was the corrupt magistrate of Namwon when Mong Yong returned from Seoul.

Fine wine in golden cups is the common people's blood,
Viands on jade dishes are the common people's flesh;
When the grease of the candles drips, the people's tears are falling,
The noise of the music is loud, but the people's cries are louder.⁴

Chun Hyang in the third milenium

Right in the center of Namwon, the setting for this play, is the reconstructed pavilion where Chun Hyang and Mong Yong first met. A shrine to Chun Hyang, also in the center of town, was erected in 1931 as a venue for rites to commemorate her spirit. In that year the citizens of Namwon revived the Chun Hyang Festival. A nationwide pansori contest is held after the rites are finished. A Chun Hyang beauty contest is also held,⁵ confirming that Chun Hyang has travelled well into the third millenium but making us question whether anything has changed in men's attitude towards women after all those centuries.

A recent survey of a Korean online bookstore showed 40 different books containing or devoted entirely to the story of Chun Hyang; a search in Google provided 144 English references. Every few years a major film about Chun Hyang is made; 15 have been produced since the first one in 1922. In the year 2000, internationally renowned director Lim Gwo'n-taek's movie "Chunhyang" was released; it now shows, with English subtitles, in theaters throughout the world. A major stage production, "The Song of Chun Hyang," opened at the National Theater in December of 2003; interestingly, child pansori singers starred in it.

In the last scene of this play the actors are directed to sing Mong Yong's poem *at* the audience, angrily. The play was written in 1966, when the nation was under a dictatorship, politics and business were rife with corruption, and the poor were brutally oppressed and exploited by the rich and powerful. The younger generation wanted to do something about this situation, as they had in 1960 when they rioted and brought about the downfall of the corrupt Sygman Rhee regime. The play was written for college students to perform, and was an opportunity for the students to rouse the public against the unjust state of affairs. Epilog: Korea is now a full-fledged democracy, and has been for quite a while now. In 1993 Kim Dae-jung was the first opposition candidate to be elected president.

Notes

1. Rutt. This is not only a valuable translation of the pansori; the introduction to the story also provides an interesting and informative discussion on the social and literary aspects of pansori.
2. Park, Chan E., p. 30.
3. Sul.
4. Sul provides this footnote: "Translation from 'The Song of a Faithful Wife Ch'unhyang,' Richard Rutt, RAS Seoul, 1999, pp. 94." [sic]
5. Park, p. 33.